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Operational Programming Factors for SR-71 GIANT REACH Mission

1. The following steps are required to develop new routes for an SR-71 mission:

a. DIA sends out to SAC at Omaha a set of objectives for a route (for example, an objective to photograph as much of the area adjacent to the Suez Canal without overflying UAR territory).

b. The unit at Omaha provides a quick sketch of the flight which includes a mission track, re-fueling points and timelines based on general operational factors. This rough plan is reviewed by an operations officer at Omaha and, if approved, is then forwarded to the SR-71 unit at Beale AFB, California.

c. The Beale unit generates through its computer the actual mission tapes which are used in the navigational system of the aircraft which contain all navigational data and camera-on/camera-off times for all of the camera systems aboard the aircraft.

d. This tape is then flown to Griffiss AFB where it is checked out with the aircraft and then becomes one of the tracks which can be used for the system.

The entire operation of generating a new route track requires about 24 hours to execute.

2. Certain types of essentially "manual" modifications to the track can be made as late as about 12 hours before aircraft take-off (for example, changing the location of the checkpoints of an operational leg). Camera operational times, however, cannot be changed. Small adjustments in the route would normally have little affect on operations with the optical bar camera (OBC) but would affect operations with the technical objective camera (TEOC) which is a "pointing" system. The operations of this camera--which is the highest resolution camera aboard--would be off-set by the amount of change made in the pre-programmed track.

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NRO, USAF and DIA review(s) completed.

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